



Billing Code 8010-01

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Data Collection Available for Public Comments

ACTION: 60 Day Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Small Business Administration (SBA) intends to request approval, from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for the collection of information described below. The Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) requires federal agencies to publish a notice in the Federal Register concerning each proposed collection of information before submission to OMB, and to allow 60 days for public comment in response to the notice. This notice complies with that requirement.

DATES: Submit comments on or before **[INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

ADDRESSES: Send all comments to Philip T. Gibson, Business Development Specialist, 202-205-7427 philip.gibson@sba.gov Office of Entrepreneurial Education, Small Business Administration, Washington, DC 20416.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Philip T. Gibson, Business Development Specialist, 202-205-7427 philip.gibson@sba.gov

Curtis B. Rich, Management Analyst, 202-205-7030 curtis.rich@sba.gov

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

In 2019 and 2021, a new cohort of sites was added to the Regional Innovation Clusters (RIC) initiative, which was originally started in October 1, 2010 by the Small Business Administration (SBA)'s Office of Entrepreneurial Development. Through this initiative, organizations in 23 communities across the U.S. have been selected to provide industry-specific assistance to small businesses, and to develop industry relationships and supply chains within their regions. Clusters—geographically concentrated groups of interconnected businesses, suppliers, service providers, and associated institutions in a

particular industry or field—act as a networking hub to convene a number of resources to help navigate the funding, procurement, and supply-chain opportunities in a specific industry.

SBA is conducting an evaluation of the Regional Innovation Clusters initiative to determine how the clusters have developed, the type and volume of services they provided to small businesses, client perceptions of the program, and the various outcomes related to their existence, including collaboration among firms, innovation, and small business growth. Small business growth will be compared to the overall growth of firms in those same regions and industries. This evaluation will also include lessons learned and success stories. SBA proposes the use of three instruments for data collection and analysis of three distinct populations. These instruments are: 1.) Small Business Survey, 2.) Large Organization Survey and 3.) Cluster Administrator Survey. In addition, SBA plans to interview each of the 11 cluster administrators several times a year regarding program impact and successes or challenges, and to obtain clarifications on information provided in quarterly reports. Each of the proposed surveys will be administered electronically and will contain both open- and close-ended questions. The information collected and analyzed from these instruments will contribute to monitoring performance metrics and program goals, as well as recommendations on improving program practices.

Solicitation of Public Comments:

SBA is requesting comments on (a) Whether the collection of information is necessary for the agency to properly perform its functions; (b) whether the burden estimates are accurate; (c) whether there are ways to minimize the burden, including through the use of

automated techniques or other forms of information technology; and (d) whether there are ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information.

OMB Control Number 3245-0392

Title: Regional Innovation Clusters (RIC) Initiative Evaluation Study

Description of Respondents: Interconnected businesses, Suppliers, Service providers, and associated institutions

Form Number: N/A

Estimated Annual Responses: 1,240

Estimated Annual Hour Burden: 388

Curtis Rich,

Management Analyst.

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